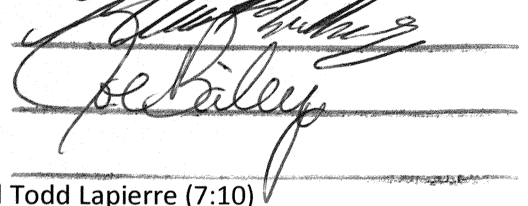


Town of Middleton  
Joint Board of Selectmen, School Board Meeting  
November 3, 2014

Approved By  
Board of Selectmen



Called to order at 6:36 PM

BOS Members Present: J. Hotchkiss, J. Bailey, M. Schwarz

School Board Members Present: A. Bowden, K. Garry, J. Mammone, and Todd Lapierre (7:10)

Pledge of Allegiance Recited

K. Garry nominated J. Hotchkiss to chair the joint board meeting. J. Bailey seconds. All in favor.

J. Hotchkiss intent of this meeting is for all to come together to talk about the future.

R. Mains spoke to Verizon in regards to the cell tower. The outcome was Verizon needs from something from the Town showing ownership which the Town does not have at this time. M. Schwarz asks if we have a contingency agreement, R. Mains states we do not at this time. J. Hotchkiss asks if Verizon is willing to wait till March. R. Mains talked to the Town Attorney Jae Whitelaw and let her know that Verizon is willing to wait till March. Jae Whitelaw and school district attorney will work together on writing the necessary warrant articles. There are two different ways this can be done. M. Schwarz would like a contingency agreement with Verizon based on the outcome of the March vote. This way the contract would be locked in until the March vote. R. Mains stated the other way would be to do special meeting which could cost up to \$300.00 per meeting. M. Schwarz believes we should not need any special meetings if Verizon is willing to wait till March. J. Hotchkiss believes you need permission for a special meeting and being so close to the annual meeting which might be difficult to accomplish.

K. Garry asked about how much land are we talking about. R. Mains stated the 5 acres. The board surveyed the land in 2004 not knowing there was no legal deed to the property for the Town. K. Garry believes that it was part of the Charet, the moving of the highway garage, which was never followed up on. K. Garry asked if the Town feels confident as far as the contract goes; not having to execute now and that Verizon is willing to wait. M. Schwarz confirms that Verizon is willing to wait. M. Schwarz states again about locking Verizon in so they do not go looking elsewhere. If at Town meeting all warrant articles pass then the Town would just move on with the contract. K. Garry states that you can easily transfer rights to a piece of property, so you can execute it now. M. Schwarz thinks it would be easier to just wait till March.

K. Garry states 5 acres is a lot of land for a cell tower. R. Mains says it is not just for the tower but still for the future Highway Garage. It is still for the original use. J. Hotchkiss spoke regarding the last town meeting where the residents spoke about still building a new highway garage. K. Garry stated the School District has been very generous with the 2 acres for the Municipal Building and has always made land available for the Town.

A. Bowden asked what happens if at Town meeting if the warrants do not pass. K. Garry stated the current school board does not have any issues but future boards might. J. Hotchkiss hopes that the townspeople will see that it was a done deal that wasn't followed through with a deal. R. Mains talks about the tower being an asset for all involved, by adding a repeater. K. Garry agrees that no matter where the revenue comes from it ends up going to the same people whether from the school district or the town. K. Garry has heard that the town plans on taking the revenue from the cell tower and putting it towards a highway garage. His feeling is we should always have a warrant article adding to the highway fund every year, at least \$5000.00. K. Garry thinks we should keep it as simple as possible. Transfer the land on one warrant article and then the second one to expend the cell tower revenue.

J. Hotchkiss stated then when the warrant article is written it should be specific, right down to the dimensions of the lot; including referencing the document that is already registered with the registry. Once the voting is complete and approved, the deed will be completed. J. Hotchkiss is pleased to see the connection between the boards.

A. Bowden suggested having the contract drawn up in the School Districts name and then switch is over in March after the vote. School board would also have to vote on leasing the land to the Town. M. Schwarz still suggests waiting for the actual vote.

K. Garry brings up the School fund balance of approximately \$488,000.00. He mentions that at the budget training he believes that the School District should be moving the fund balance over to the Town account. Historically this has not been happening. The amount left over from the previous year has been left in the account and offset the new school tax rate. If the School District retains the funds this year the tax rate would drop down. Ken comments on spreading the fund balance out over a few years to keep the rate somewhat even, so it does not slope. If they physically move the funds then the town then the board can set funds aside. Mentions looking for a commitment that says the Board of Selectmen are willing to take the \$488,000.00 and any subsequent fund balance and apply it to create an even School Tax Rate. J. Bailey states the Board of Selectmen have the ability to set funds aside. J. Bailey believes there is a certain fund to set funds into to use as needed. The Board of Selectmen can set aside and use over a period of time to reduce the tax rate. K. Garry stresses the importance of the School Board, Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee is to work collaboratively. J. Hotchkiss questions how the fund balance was handled in the past. K. Garry explained how it would stay in the school fund and offset the amount the Board would have to raise. The difference this year is the School Board knows that there is the upcoming cost (6 million dollar bond) that will change things. K. Garry questions if someone can stand up at town meeting and make a motion to draw of the fund balance? J. Bailey thinks that needs to be checked with DRA. K. Garry, just trying to keep things consistent. J. Hotchkiss believes monies left over from School budget should be used for the school. J. Mammone states that if it is not done correctly, there will be a big drop in taxes and next year a large climb up. J. Bailey comments on making sure we do this correctly with setting aside funds and secure them, because in a few months there could be different selectmen who think differently. K. Garry comments on how it might not be exactly \$488,000.00 due to expenses that may not have been paid. J. Hotchkiss would like input from the School Board on how to expend the school fund balance.

J. Hotchkiss summarizes; he hopes that the two boards continue to talk in an open meeting. It is clear about the cell tower and what needs to be completed.

K. Garry makes a motion to adjourn the joint board meeting. A. Bowden seconds. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Laura Parker, BOS Secretary